

REMARKS

In the Official Action of March 15, 2005, the Examiner objected to claim 10 due to an antecedent basis error; rejected claim 14 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite; rejected claims 1-2, 4, 6-7, 11-12, 14, 24, 26, and 30-31 under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Ishisaka (US 6,289,126); rejected claims 3, 5, 8-10, 15-17, 23, 25, and 27-29 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishisaka in view of Ross (US 6,608,628); rejected claim 13 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishisaka in view of Schultz et al. (US 2001/002315 A1); and rejected claims 18-22 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ishisaka in view of DeYong et al. (US 6,577,757). The present communication is fully responsive to the Official Action of March 15, 2005.

In response to the antecedent basis problem, Applicant has amended claim 10 to depend from claim 8 instead of claim 1. In response to the rejection of claim 14 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, Applicant has replaced the phrase “at least hundreds of times” with the phrase “at least 200 times”. Applicant assert that one skilled in the art, when reading the present specification, would have understood these two phrases to be equivalent.

In response to the rejection of the claims under 35 USC 102(e) and 35 USC 103(a), Applicant has cancelled claim 13 and incorporated this subject matter into each of the independent claims (claims 1, 30, and 31). The magnitude of the “pheromone value” associated with a cell (as this phrase is used in the specification) is determined by the number of agents that have detected and successfully traced a structure or structures passing through the cell. See, for instance, the last full paragraph on page 13 and the paragraph spanning pages 7 and 8. This concept is not disclosed or suggested by any of the prior art references.

Applicants request reconsideration of this application, respectfully assert that each of the rejections or objections have been addressed or overcome, and request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge or credit any deficiency or overpayment to Deposit Account Nº. 19-0615. This sheet is filed in duplicate.

Respectfully submitted,



William B. Batzer
Registration No. 37,088

Date: June 15, 2005
Schlumberger-Doll Research
36 Old Quarry Road
Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877-4108
(203) 431-5506